



## Mr. Robert G. Heft

January 19, 1942 - December 12, 2009

The designer of America's 50-star flag passed away Saturday afternoon, December 12, 2009, at Covenant Medical Center in Saginaw, Michigan. Age 67 years. Bob was born on January 19, 1942, in Saginaw. He was moved to Ohio as a young child, where he was raised by his grandparents. While a 17 year-old junior at Lancaster High School in Lancaster, Ohio, Bob made his mark in our nation's history by preparing for a U.S. History project in 1958, where he fashioned the family flag into what is now our country's symbol. Bob traveled the world extensively telling countless people of his unique story. Bob attended Ohio University and Ohio State University. He retired after 30 years as a high school and college history teacher. He was a seven-term Mayor of Napoleon, Ohio and past state president of the Ohio Mayor's Association. He was a member of Resurrection Lutheran Church, Saginaw, past president of the Saginaw Lions Club, District 11-D1 Governor of Lions Club International, was active in Habitat for Humanity, America's Promise, Junior Achievement, 4-H, and a former member of the Masons. His interest in flags originally came from his volunteer work as a former Boy Scout. Bob was a very proud American. He devoted his life to inspiring others.

Bob is survived by a nephew, Edward Heft, two great-nephews, E.J. Heft and Mark Heft; a great-niece, Julia Heft; many other nieces and nephews; half-brothers and half-sisters; a sister-in-law, Joanne Heft; and many dear friends, especially those at the Saginaw Lions Club.

Funeral service will take place 11:00 a.m. Thursday, December 17, 2009, at Resurrection Lutheran Church, 2110 Brockway St., Saginaw, Michigan. The Rev. Kathleen Basner will officiate with burial in Holy Cross Lutheran Cemetery. Friends are welcome to visit with the family at the Wakeman Funeral Home, Inc., 1218 N. Michigan Ave., on Tuesday from 4:00 to 8:00 p.m., on Wednesday from 2:00 to 8:00 p.m., then at the church on Thursday from 10:00 a.m. until the time of service. The family requests memorials to be given to Saginaw Lions Club, P.O. Box 2211, Saginaw, Michigan 48605, or Resurrection Lutheran Church, 2110 Brockway St., Saginaw, Michigan 48602.

Sympathies may be shared with the family online at [www.WakemanFuneralHome.com](http://www.WakemanFuneralHome.com)

# Cemetery Details

## Holy Cross Lutheran Cemetery

4700 Brockway Rd.  
Saginaw, MI 48638

# Previous Events

## Visitation

DEC 15. 4:00 PM - 8:00 PM (ET)

Wakeman Funeral Home, Inc.  
1218 N. Michigan Ave.  
Saginaw, MI 48602  
(989) 752-8531  
wakemanfh@charter.net

## Visitation

DEC 16. 2:00 PM - 8:00 PM (ET)

Wakeman Funeral Home, Inc.  
1218 N. Michigan Ave.  
Saginaw, MI 48602  
(989) 752-8531  
wakemanfh@charter.net

## Service

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DEC 17. 11:00 AM (ET)

Resurrection Lutheran Church  
2110 Brockway St.  
Saginaw, MI 48602  
[ressurrectionlc@sbcglobal.net](mailto:ressurrectionlc@sbcglobal.net)

# Tribute Wall

SI

“ To the family of Mr. Heft, I am so sorry for your loss. He was an inspiration his whole life, and I am grateful to know of him and to tell others about his important contribution as a young man. I was born only 9 years later, and Mr. Heft's flag is the only one I have known. My condolences arrive late as I first learned about him from the USA page on the Run The World today. I looked up his biography this early morning and the article on this site popped up. May you find peace and comfort of God now and always as you remember him.



Sylvia Ireland - June 25 at 01:53 AM



“ Mr. Robert G. Heft

September 13, 2022 at 05:01 PM



“ Mr. Robert G. Heft

September 13, 2022 at 02:27 PM

DJ

“ I still can't believe Bob is gone. He has impacted our lives in just a few short months but in monumental ways. His friendship and humor will be missed. He made many friends down here in Kentucky. Thank you, Heft family, for sharing him with us.

Delinda Johnson - December 19, 2009 at 03:07 PM

AM

“ To the family of Bob Heft: I am a member of the Philip Livingston Chapter, NSDAR who was fortunate to introduce and sit with him at our 105th Michigan State Conference of the Daughters of the American Revolution.

*I represented the DAR as State Chairman of the Flag of the United States of America. I will cherish this memory of him. He was kind, gentle and unique personalty and created a place in our history.*

*Your family is in my thoughts and prayers.*

*Sincerely, Alice Merrill Miller*

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**alice miller** - December 18, 2009 at 07:48 AM

SR

“ To the Family of Mr. Heft...I have fond memories of Mr. Heft as my college professor at Northwest Technical College in Archbold, Ohio. He was a great professor who made a lasting impression on me. My thoughts and prayers are with you..

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**Susan (Bowman) Roberts** - December 16, 2009 at 07:10 PM

CB

“ To the Family of Mr. Robert Heft we send our condolences. Mr. Heft has left his mark in our Nations History. He will forever be remembered for His Patroitic Heart and that Huge Smile, that has left an Imprint within all our hearts. Much Love to you all, I know we will miss him, we can only imagin what a loss this is for you.

*Love,*

*Blue Star Mothers Of America, Inc., Department of Michigan*

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**Carla Brodacki** - December 16, 2009 at 01:31 PM

DW

“ Rich and Bev Elling would like to send their deepest sympathy to the family of Bob Heft. He was a great friend and the only person to call me "Bevy Lou". He was a wonderful man and was greatly loved. Rest in peace Robert....

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**Don Wiemken** - December 15, 2009 at 04:11 PM

DW

“ Don and Bev at Wendt Shoes in Napoleon, Ohio would like to offer our sympathies to the family of Bob Heft. Bob was a great guy and we will remember him fondly. He was a great ambassador for the City of Napoleon and a truly great American!! He will be greatly missed.

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**Don Wiemken** - December 15, 2009 at 04:09 PM

BB

“ My thoughts and prayers are with Bob's family. My memories of him are all fond. He would stop in whenever he came through Gaylord. I enjoyed talking with him as he was a great story teller. Bob was a great man and will be greatly missed.

*Bruce Brown*

*Alpine Chocolat Haus, Gaylord*

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**Bruce Brown`** - December 15, 2009 at 03:01 PM

AM

“ You are in our thoughts and prayers.  
God Bless You, Anne and Fred McLaren Grand Rapids, Ohio

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**anne mclaren** - December 15, 2009 at 02:28 PM

AS

“ *Our condolences to the family of Mr. Heft. --from the Ohio Municipal League and the Mayors Association of Ohio..*

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**April Strawser** - December 15, 2009 at 12:49 PM

PS

“ *I had the pleasure of meeting Bob a few years ago when he came to speak to the Ohio Society Daughters of the American Revolution. I was his contact person for the event. We spoke before the event and shared the diaz with our State Regent. He had the two of us laughing all through the dinner. Then I had the honor to introduce him and listen to his story. It was truly wonderful. Then he signed flags for our membership. I had him sign a small flag for my 4 year old grandson who had a birthday the next week. I know my grandson will appreciate this flag more when he grows older and can realize its importance. I already appreciate my signed flag even more now. All the Ohio DAR members will miss Bob and his wonderful American patriotism.*

*Pat Sammons,*

*The Flag of the United States of America Chairman, Ohio Society Daughters of the American Revolution*

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**Pat Sammons** - December 15, 2009 at 11:51 AM

SL

“ *Bob was a gentle and humble man with a pride in America that was contagious. If you had the honor to meet him, you left with a renewed patriotism. We need more Bob Heft's in our nation ... he will be missed and remembered sweetly.*

*Sheldon and Mary Levy*

*Midland, Michigan*

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**Sheldon and Mary Levy** - December 15, 2009 at 09:30 AM



“ I had the honor of hearing Bob speak and sign flags for my family - one for my mother-in-law who had just become a citizen. I will always remember him as a legend.

*Melissa Prouty  
Oregon Township Deputy Clerk*

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**Melissa Prouty** - December 15, 2009 at 08:51 AM

BH

“ I never had a chance to meet Bob and had made several attempts to contact him but with his busy schedule I can understand. My sympathies goes out to Bob's family. His legacy will live on forever with the lives he has touched.

*America mourn's the loss of a Great American!  
God Bless Bob and his Family!*

*Brad Heft  
Haskins, Ohio*

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**Brad Heft** - December 15, 2009 at 07:53 AM

DH

“ Our family has had the honor of enjoying Bob's friendship for the past 30 years, going back to when he first came to Napoleon, Ohio. He soon became part of our family and we have many, many fond memories. One time Bob joined us for a family gathering and we invited him to join us in a friendly game of "softball". We had players from all stages of life beginning with players as young as 6-7 and continuing on to my grandmother who was in her 60's. Bob was playing in the outfield and of course when the young kids would come to bat, he'd move in, and when the older players would bat he would move back. My grandmother finally came to bat and Bob moved way in only to have "Grandma" hit it way over his head into the outfield. He was in total disbelief that this little "ole" woman could hit the ball so far! He laughed and laughed and he brought this story up everytime he saw my grandma.

Another time he came to visit my wife and me when we were remodeling our house back in about 1978. We were hanging wallpaper and he was looking at all the improvements we were making. As he was getting ready to leave, we started talking about something and he leaned his hand against the wall and of course the newly hung wallpaper moved right down the wall. His face turned all red and he began apologizing and we all laughed so hard. We straightened the paper out and all was fine. Whenever he came back to visit after that he would always go to that wall and say it was the one he decorated. I last spoke with Bob in "Spenglers " in Napoleon this past spring where he was enjoying spending time with his good friends Rupert and Rita Schwienhagen. Bob was a very integral part of the "Hall" family during his years in Napoleon. He will forever be a part of our family. We love you Robert!

*Doug and Lori Hall  
Napoleon, Ohio*

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**Doug and Lori Hall** - December 14, 2009 at 10:37 PM

PT

“*Mr. Heft as I knew him was a master of governance, an eloquent speaker, an inspiration, and very generous man. Mr. Heft spent many hours teaching me what it meant to be a good citizen and he helped me earn numerous merit badges, which ultimately helped me earn the highest rank in the Boy Scouts of America, Eagle Scout. I have frequently reflected on his personal story about designing the 50 star flag and this remains a inspiration.*

*Mr. Heft you will be missed, God bless you and your family.*

*Peter Thomas*

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**Peter Thomas** - December 14, 2009 at 10:31 PM

TL

“*I have had the pleasure of knowing Bob for the past 3 years as we were both part of the local Toastmasters club. When our board held its first club open house, Bob presented our club with an autographed U.S. flag he signed at ground zero on the 4th of July. Being the incoming president at the time, I had the honor of accepting the flag on the club's behalf. I told Bob and the club that being a immigrant to this country with little to no english, no money, no assurance of what was ahead, his flag was a symbol of something we didn't have in our country. It was a remarkable experience and one I will cherish the rest of my life. I will miss you always my friend.*

*Thao Lo*

*Saginaw Harvey Spaulding Toastmasters*

*Saginaw, MI*

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**thao lo** - December 14, 2009 at 09:36 PM

MW

“ I met Bob Heft by chance in 2002 at Bronners in Frankenmuth, Michigan where he was signing flag items. Through a long conversation, we talked about the company where I work, Herff Jones, Inc., being a manufacturer of scholastic recognition rings. He stated that he always wanted to have a special ring commemorating his design of the 50 star flag. I advised that I believed my company could design such a ring if he would come to Indianapolis to accept it and speak to our employees. Bob designed the ring and we crafted it for him - it was a beauty. His talk to our employees was unforgettable, but getting to know Bob Heft was the true treasure and I'm fortunate to stay in touch with him over these past years. When my wife and I dined with him one evening, we were regaled in stories of Presidents, his tours with the Bob Hope USO troupe, his visits with our GI's, our embassies, service organizations, etc. He was a delight to know - a true gentleman. He was especially pleased when his 50 star flag became our nation's longest serving flag. His place in America history is secure. May God Bless Bob Heft and his family.

*Michael Williams  
Herff Jones, Inc.  
Indianapolis, IN*

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**Michael Williams** - December 14, 2009 at 08:54 PM

SE

“ Bob Heft was an instrumental part of the formation of the Resurrection Lutheran Church Men's Club Dartball League, as well as an active member of the club, lending his time and talents wherever he could. His presence will be greatly missed by all.

*Steven J. Eimers  
President  
Resurrection Lutheran Church Men's Club*

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**Steven Eimers** - December 14, 2009 at 08:22 PM

JC

“ *Candle lit by*



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**Julie Conant** - December 14, 2009 at 07:35 PM

RS

“ *Bob Heft has always been a great friend to the Schroeder family and will never be forgotten. My thoughts and prayers go out to the family of Bob and Bob was always thought of as a member of our family. My parents and Bob are now back together in heaven making blond jokes and Lions Club fundraisers.*

*Randy Schroeder*

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**Randy Schroeder** - December 14, 2009 at 05:21 PM



“ *1 file added to the album Photo Memories of Robert G. Heft*



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**Rodney Wakeman** - December 14, 2009 at 11:08 AM



“ It was a great honor to have been a friend of Bob's. God gave Bob a very special gift to prepare our country's symbol so he could use it to spread patriotism and the freedoms we enjoy here in the United States all around the world. Any time a 50-star American flag ruffles in the wind in any place around the world, his contribution to our country's history will forever remain in everyone's mind. God bless you.

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**Rodney Wakeman** - December 14, 2009 at 10:59 AM